

THE SPIRITUAL FELLOWSHIP

confessing, God so wondrously changed my heart at her first word that I went straightway to confess myself sacramentally; and that first visit was so efficacious that I became all the contrary to what I had been before." After a few more visits to her, he completely abandoned his former mode of life ; and so great was the change that, whereas hitherto his own wife, " a noble damsel, fair and beautiful according to the flesh, but far more according to virtue and spirit," had not sufficed him, " but I was striving also, according to my power, to have several other women," he now, with her consent, lived for a long time with her in chastity, and, shunning the worldly pleasures in which his soul had delighted, he found his joy in the churches and in conversing with the servants of God, and began to frequent Catherine's house and listen to her teaching.

Nevertheless, shortly after, he fell into a grave sin—known, he says, only to God. " Immediately after the commission of this sin, touched by God, I went to the virgin's home, and, as soon as I had entered her house, before I had come to her presence, beyond her wont she had me called to her ; and, having sent out all the others who were with her, she made me sit down near her, and said to me : 'Tell me, how long is it since thou didst go to confession ?' To which I answered : ° Last Saturday.' And this was perfectly true, for such was the custom of all of us who conversed with her. Then she : * Go and confess at once ;' to which I : ° My sweet mother, I will confess to-morrow, which is Saturday.' But she repeated the same thing, saying : * Go, and do what I tell thee.' And when I sought some delay, and refused to do it just then, she, with face glowing and enkindled, said to me : ' How, my son, dost thou "think that I have not my eyes ever open over my children ? You could not do or say anything without my knowing it. And how dost thou think to hide from me that thou hast just now done so and so? Go therefore, immediately, and cleanse thyself from such great misery.' Then, when I heard her tell me exactly all that I had done and said, confused and full of shame, without any other answer, I straightway heedfully fulfilled her command and went to